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**From the Director's Desk**  
**--John Howard, M.D. Director, NIOSH**  
**January eNews 2010**

## **Green and Safe — by Design**

Last month, in remarks that followed his appearance at the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen, President Obama reaffirmed his vision of clean energy and the curbing of carbon emissions as an economic and national security imperative. "If America leads in developing clean energy," the President said, "we will lead in growing our economy, in putting our people back to work, and in leaving a stronger and more secure country to our children."

The commitment to reducing carbon emissions and developing an environmentally sustainable economy poses complex and challenging questions. However, as President Obama suggested, it also presents an opportunity that many entrepreneurs and business leaders will be quick to seize. Efforts to develop new sources of sustainable energy, to limit and conserve today's fossil fuels, and to expand the use of

environmentally friendly practices and products already inform financial decisions every day across a wide range of industries, including energy supply, recycling, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, mining, and transportation.

The implications of a "green" economy for occupational safety and health were highlighted at last month's workshop, "Making Green Jobs Safe: Integrating Occupational Safety and Health into Green and Sustainability." At the same time world leaders were meeting in Copenhagen, NIOSH and its partners were hosts to more than 150 stakeholders in Washington, D.C. The workshop focused on ensuring that the safety and health needs of workers are included in initiatives to mitigate global warming, protect the climate, and cope with effects that are expected even if greenhouse emissions stopped today.

I was pleased that the workshop generated lively and thoughtful discussion. Certain observations emerged as common themes throughout the meeting:

- Incorporating worker health and safety into green jobs, early in their design or creation, has the potential for being a "transformative" breakthrough for doing business in the 21st century, in which preventing occupational injuries and illnesses is widely accepted as a fundamental business practice. Building safety and health into a new business, workplace, or job is a basic principle of NIOSH's Prevention through Design (PtD) program (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ptd/>), of which the green, safe jobs initiative is a part.
- Inherently, a green job is no safer than a job in a traditional task that involves similar conditions or demands, whether working with heavy equipment or handling potentially toxic chemicals. Our colleague Michael J. Wright, director of health, safety, and environment for the United Steelworkers of America, noted this analogy in his keynote address at the workshop: If a worker dies in a fall from a height of 40 feet, the tragic outcome is the same regardless of whether he was installing solar panels or maintaining a smokestack.
- One chemical or process may be more environmentally beneficial than another, but the benefits for the environment do not necessarily make the substitute chemical or process safer for workers. An example is the solvent 1-bromopropane (1-BP), which is used increasingly as a substitute for ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons. Recent findings associate 1-BP with the risk of neurological impairment

from work-related exposures. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5748a2.htm>

If worker health and safety is to take hold as a guiding principle in green jobs, key decision-makers at many levels of industry will have to be engaged and convinced, from financial officers who sign off on corporate budgets to managers who have responsibility for running day-to-day operations at individual work sites.

As the green economy expands, occupational safety and health professionals will have to keep pace or risk falling behind. At the outset, we face critical gaps in knowing, with confidence, all the types of existing jobs that may be regarded as "green," anticipating those yet to come, and understanding all of the occupational hazards they may entail.

Selected presentations and proceedings from the workshop will be posted on the "Prevention through Design: Green, Safe, and Healthy Jobs" web page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/PtD/greenjobs.html>. I encourage you to watch for these materials and to consider ways in which you can help NIOSH and its partners meet these and other critical and challenging tasks that we face as we enter a new year and a new decade. As food for thought along those lines, I invite your attention to the NIOSH Science Blog for January 4, 2010, in which we present six ideas about the steps needed to protect both workers and the environment by making occupational (worker) safety and health concepts part of green and sustainability developments. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/>

### **NIOSH National Construction Center Cooperative Agreement Awarded to CPWR- The Center for Construction Research and Training**

NIOSH is excited to announce a five-year, \$25 million cooperative agreement award to CPWR-The Center for Construction Research and Training. The award was based on the extramural competition resulting from the NIOSH National Construction Center Request for Application (RFA) published in February, 2009. Erich (Pete) Stafford, executive director of CPWR, is the principal investigator for this award. The Center, based in Silver Spring, Md., includes both internal researchers and a university-based consortium involving nine different academic partners. NIOSH intends for the Center to directly link to the diverse construction community, to serve as a leader in applied construction research, and to diffuse and disseminate effective interventions in the construction industry. More information about the 17 new projects, which target a number of NORA Construction goals and emerging issues, is available at [http://www.cpwr.com/research-new\\_projects.html](http://www.cpwr.com/research-new_projects.html). "We are pleased that CPWR will work with stakeholders and NIOSH to advance construction safety and health research. They have a long and relevant history in the area, and we look forward to working with them," said NIOSH Director John Howard, M.D. For information about the NIOSH Construction Research Program, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/construction/>.

## **NIOSH Announces New Office of Construction Safety and Health**

In December, NIOSH announced its new Office of Construction Safety and Health. Christine Branche, Ph.D., NIOSH Principal Associate Director, will serve as acting director of the new office. Construction is a key industrial sector that employs over eight million Americans. To address the special problems in construction, it is critical that NIOSH ensures rigorous coordination of our construction safety and health research. For more on construction research at NIOSH, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/construction/>.

## **2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act Includes Increase for NIOSH**

The 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act, signed by President Obama on Dec. 16, includes \$373,171,000 for NIOSH. This amount represents a \$13.1 million increase over NIOSH's funding for Fiscal Year 2009. It includes \$70,723,000 for the World Trade Center medical monitoring and treatment program, administered by NIOSH. Further, the bill provides an additional amount of \$55,358,000 to support NIOSH's technical and scientific responsibilities under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act.

## **New Web Site Available on NIOSH Scientific Information Quality**

A new NIOSH web page at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/peer/> provides an easily accessible, one-stop, and up-to-date source of information on the independent peer review of all NIOSH documents that are defined by NIOSH as influential in terms of their potential impact on public policy or the private sector. This information also demonstrates NIOSH compliance with administrative requirements, including Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements, for public posting of influential documents. The new page lists all such NIOSH documents and provides links to each document and to all independent peer-review comments for each document.

## **NIOSH Blog Named in "Top 50 Blogs to Learn About Medicine"**

The website "Masters in Nursing Online" named the NIOSH Science Blog as number five in its Dec. 9 list of "Top 50 Blogs to Learn About Medicine." According to the site, these blogs provide a wide-ranging resource for readers who want to learn more about medicine. <http://mastersinnursingonline.com/2009/top-50-blogs-to-learn-about-medicine/>

## NIOSH Pioneer Frank Stern Retires

Epidemiologist Frank Stern, MS, is retiring from the NIOSH Division of Surveillance, Hazard Evaluations, and Field Studies after 39 years of government service. Mr. Stern is thought to be the last actively employed NIOSH employee who has been with the agency from its creation. Mr. Stern started his career in 1970 at the Bureau of Occupational Safety and Health the predecessor of NIOSH, as a computer systems analyst. Mr. Stern has worked on various studies throughout his career at NIOSH. His work regarding beta-naphthylamine at the Augusta Chemical Co. in Augusta, Ga., was the forerunner to the NIOSH Worker Notification Program. He also authored 36 peer-reviewed publications and received two Alice Hamilton Award nominations.



## In Memoriam: NIOSH Team Leader Dr. Petia Simeonova

NIOSH extends condolences to the family and friends of Petia Petrova Simeonova, M.D., Ph.D., from the NIOSH Health Effects Laboratory Division in Morgantown, W.Va., who passed away on Dec. 16, 2009, after a long and brave battle with cancer. Dr. Simeonova came to NIOSH in 1996 from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health. She was an accomplished, internationally recognized scientist with numerous publications in the medical research field of immunotoxicology and in groundbreaking toxicological research on nanomaterials, and was frequently cited in the scientific literature. Her research contributions have been recognized by several prestigious scientific awards, including two Alice Hamilton Awards for Excellence in Occupational Safety and Health, and several nominations for the Charles Shepard Award with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



## MSHA and NIOSH Unite to Eliminate Black Lung

Coal workers' pneumoconiosis, also known as black lung disease, persists as a work-related hazard in coal mining. NIOSH joins with the Mine Safety and Health Administration and other partners in a renewed effort — which began with a Dec. 3 MSHA kickoff event in Beckley, W.Va. — to eliminate this irreversible but preventable work-related illness. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-12-03-09.html>



## Worker Safety and Health Photos Available at Flickr

The NIOSH [Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/niosh/) page <http://www.flickr.com/photos/niosh/> includes photos from the Enhanced Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program, the nation's sentinel field effort through NIOSH to monitor the incidence of black lung disease. More about the program at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/surveillance/ords/ecwhsp.html>.

## Report Released from Aging Worker Conference

A newly released report from a NIOSH-cosponsored national research workshop, "Healthy Aging for Workers," in February 2009 recommends attention to workplace environments to maintain "work ability" as workers age, along with legislative fixes and research to fill in knowledge gaps for keeping workers healthy and productive. Links to the report and videos highlights from the meeting are available on the NIOSH WorkLife Initiative web page. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/worklife/>

## MMWR Investigates Reported Antimony Oxide Exposure Outbreak

Did firefighters' exposure to antimony in their fire-retardant uniform pants put them at risk of hazardous exposures to the metal? Responding to the concern, NIOSH investigated and found no scientific evidence of a risk. Find out how and why in the Nov. 27 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5846a4.htm>

## Kerry Souza Honored as "Young Activist" in Improving the Lives of Workers

Congratulations to NIOSH epidemiologist Kerry Souza, ScD, MPH, who won the 2009 Lorin Kerr Award, which "recognizes a younger activist for their sustained and outstanding efforts and dedication to improve the lives of workers." The award is presented by the Occupational Health and Safety Section of the American Public Health Association (APHA). Her work included an innovative program that enhances community health centers' abilities to recognize and treat work-related injuries among low-income, minority, and immigrant workers, and the development of the Occupational Health Disparities Institute, which has become a significant part of the OHS Section activities at the APHA Annual Meeting.

<http://sph.bu.edu/insider/index.php/Alumni-News/souza-sph-98-wins-apha-award-for-work-in-occupational->

## Global Happenings

### Dr. Stephen Levin Receives Prestigious Irving J. Selikoff Award

Stephen M. Levin, M.D., research director for the Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, and an internationally known expert in occupational medicine and asbestos-related disease, was given the International Collegium Ramazzini's prestigious Irving J. Selikoff Memorial Award on Dec. 2 in New York City. The award, which has only been conferred five times in the academy's 27-year history, is given periodically to a scientist or humanist whose studies and achievements have contributed to the protection of workers' health and the environment.

## NIOSH Seeks Public Comment

### Survey of Healthcare Workers' Health and Safety Practices

Comment on the paperwork aspects of a proposed study of healthcare workers' health and safety practices. <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-29109.htm>

### Half-mask Air-purifying Respirators Requirements

The comment period for the proposed rule for TIL requirements for half-mask air-purifying respirators has been extended until March 29, 2010.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docket/nioshdocket0137.html>.


To view a comprehensive list of NIOSH Docket items currently open for comment, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/>.

## New Health Hazard Evaluation Report Now Available

The NIOSH HHE Program evaluated chemical exposures at a facility where glass beads are blended and repackaged to be applied over wet paint to make street markings reflective to automobile headlights. The request concerned potential chemical hazards relating to a





silane coating on the imported beads. Investigators recommended that managers require  employees to wear safety glasses or goggles when handling glass beads. Employees were advised to wash their hands before eating or touching their faces. Due to employee health concerns, the company has stopped importing certain glass beads. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2008-0017-3095.pdf>

## News from Our Partners

### Video Addresses Bullying in the Workplace

Do you work with a bully? It appears that the answer is yes for many employees. In just one year, there were 100,000 web downloads of Washington State's Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program publication "Workplace Bullying: What Everyone Needs to Know" <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Files/Bullying.pdf>. The document defines workplace bullying, describes its impact on individuals and organizations, and includes a workplace bullying policy example as well as additional resources.

### Video Highlights California Toxic Substance Symposium

The California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) posted a video from their Nov. 16, 2009, Nanotechnology Initiative Symposium in Sacramento, Calif. The video highlights meeting and features interviews with speakers, including Charles L. Geraci, Ph.D., coordinator of the NIOSH cross-sector nanotechnology research program. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbXvDCni8ds>.

### CPWR Announces Construction Safety Web Resource

CPWR-The Center for Construction Research and Training announced the launch of a new Web site, eLCOSH Images, <http://www.elcosh.org/images>, to provide high-quality safety and health photos free to the construction industry. "We're able to offer this new service to trainers, safety managers and others concerned with safe construction practices because of an initial gift from NIOSH," said Pete Stafford, executive director of CPWR-The Center for Construction Research and Training. "NIOSH gave us hundreds of slides it had received from John Rekus, formerly with Maryland OSHA and safety consultant. We decided to create an online collection point for construction photos to be used in training, toolbox talks, or any other venture to improve safety and health conditions and work practices on U.S. construction sites, and we began with Rekus' images." More information about CPWR is available at <http://www.cpwr.com/>.

### NIOSH Collaborates with Industry to Protect Workers Using Hydraulic Stump Cutters



NIOSH and Vermeer Corporation have collaborated to apply capacitive sensing technology to detect operators at the controls of a hydraulic stump cutter. This partnership provides an opportunity for the technology to be adapted into a commercial product. Vermeer effectively transferred NIOSH's basic research and integrated the concepts into their stump cutter product line. Collectively, these efforts produced a stump cutter that can detect an operator at the machine's controls, which will benefit equipment owners and operators. To learn more, please contact John Powers at [jpowers@cdc.gov](mailto:jpowers@cdc.gov). References to companies and commercial products do not constitute a NIOSH commercial endorsement.

## NORA

### National Healthcare and Social Assistance Agenda Available

The National Healthcare and Social Assistance Agenda under the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/>. The agenda contains five strategic goals designed to address top safety and health concerns and to promote the greatest opportunities to advance protections within the sector. Contact the NORA coordinator ([noracoordinator@cdc.gov](mailto:noracoordinator@cdc.gov)) with questions or suggestions or to join others to work on these goals.

## NIOSH Science Blog

### What's New on the NIOSH Blog?

NIOSH Blogs on a solution for more effective use of periodic spirometry.  
[http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb121409\\_spirometry.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb121409_spirometry.html)

Your comments are wanted on considerations for making green and sustainable jobs safe and healthy for workers. [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb010410\\_green.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb010410_green.html)

## **New Communication Products**

### **Implications of Genetics in the Workplace**

NIOSH announces the publication of "Genetics in the Workplace: Implications for Occupational Safety and Health." The purpose of this document is to consolidate the diverse literature and opinions on genetics in the workplace, to flag important issues, and to provide some considerations for current and future research and practice. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-101/>

### **What Are the Costs When a Worker Dies in the Line of Duty?**

NIOSH announces the publication of "The Cost of Fatal Injuries to Civilian Workers in the United States, 1992-2001." The data in this document measure the economic loss to society from the premature deaths of workers. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2009-154/>

### **Vehicle Rollover Topic of Recent Firefighter Fatality Investigation Report**

One Georgia career firefighter dies and another is seriously injured in a vehicle rollover crash (F2009-04). <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face200904.html>

### **More...**

To see other new NIOSH communication products, including documents and new and updated topic pages, go to the NIOSH "What's New" page. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/whatsnew/>

### **Call for Abstracts**

#### **ASTM, International Symposium on Surface and Dermal Sampling**

Call for papers. Deadline for submission is Jan. 14, 2010. <http://www.astm.org/d22symp1010.htm>

#### **NIOSH and *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health***

Call for papers on nanotechnology exposure assessment. Deadline for submission is Jan. 15, 2010. <http://www.ijoe.com/index.php/ijoe/information/callforpapers>

## **Social Marketing in Public Health**

Call for abstracts. Deadline for submissions is Jan. 18, 2010.

<http://www.cme.hsc.usf.edu/smph/>

## **Nanomaterials and Worker Health: Medical Surveillance, Exposure Registries, and Epidemiologic Research**

Call for abstracts for oral presentations or posters. Deadline for submissions is Jan. 29, 2010.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/nanotech/keystone2010/>

## **Upcoming Conferences & Workshops**

### **National Action Summit for Latino Worker Health and Safety**

NIOSH will cosponsor the National Action Summit for Latino Worker Health and Safety (Cumbre de Acción Nacional para la Salud y Seguridad del Trabajador Latino) sponsored by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration on April 14-15, 2010, in Houston, Texas. More information will be coming soon at

<http://www.osha.gov/>.

### **Nanomaterials and Worker Health: Medical Surveillance, Exposure Registries, and Epidemiologic Research**

NIOSH and the Mountain and Plains Education and Research Center will hold a conference. "Nanomaterials and Worker Health: Medical Surveillance, Exposure Registries, and Epidemiologic Research," July 21-23, 2010, in Keystone, Colo. The aim of the conference is to identify gaps in information and address questions focusing on occupational health surveillance, exposure registries, and epidemiologic research involving nanotechnology workers.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/nanotech/keystone2010/>

### **History of Occupational and Environmental Health Conference**

Registration is open for the 4th International Conference on the History of Occupational and Environmental Health to be held June 19-22 in San Francisco, Calif. The meeting is organized by University of California San Francisco and the International Commission on Occupational Health. This will be the first conference in its series held in North America.

<https://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MMJ10014>.

A comprehensive list of upcoming conferences can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/exhibits.html>.

## Word of the Month

**Flickr** - According to Wikipedia, Flickr is an image and video hosting website, web services suite, and online community platform. NIOSH currently has over 200 occupational safety and health-related photos available for public use on our Flickr site [www.flickr.com/niosh](http://www.flickr.com/niosh). To add or donate photos, please email Tanya Headley at [theadley@cdc.gov](mailto:theadley@cdc.gov).

### **NIOSH eNews on the Web: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/)**

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